DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 276 520 PS 016 203

AUTHOR Birckmayer, Jennifer
TITLE A Day in Day Care: A Program for Two-Year-Olds.
INSTITUTION Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y. Cooperative Extension Service.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 27p.
AVAILABLE FROM Media Services Distribution Center, Cornell University, 7-8 Research Park, Ithaca, NY 14850 (Publication No. HDFS-11, $2.50).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Criteria; *Day Care; Educational Equipment; *Educational Practices; *Educational Quality; Guidelines; *Learning Centers (Classroom); Models; *Preschool Curriculum; Preschool Education; *Program Design; Program Implementation; Selection

ABSTRACT

This description of a safe and interesting day care program for 2-year-olds can be used by parents as a guide to selecting good day care; it can also be used by a day care center to stimulate discussion about program planning and implementation. Although the program described is not considered to be a perfect one, it would meet New York State Department of Social Services day care licensing standards. Most early childhood educators would probably find it acceptable, although some would suggest changes or improvements. The description of the program is arranged sequentially from early morning preparations to the end-of-day routine for the convenience of groups wishing to use it as the basis for discussion. For caregivers interested in setting up a program or modifying an existing day care program, guidelines on selecting equipment, arranging equipment in seven basic activity areas, and planning activities for toddlers also are provided. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED276520

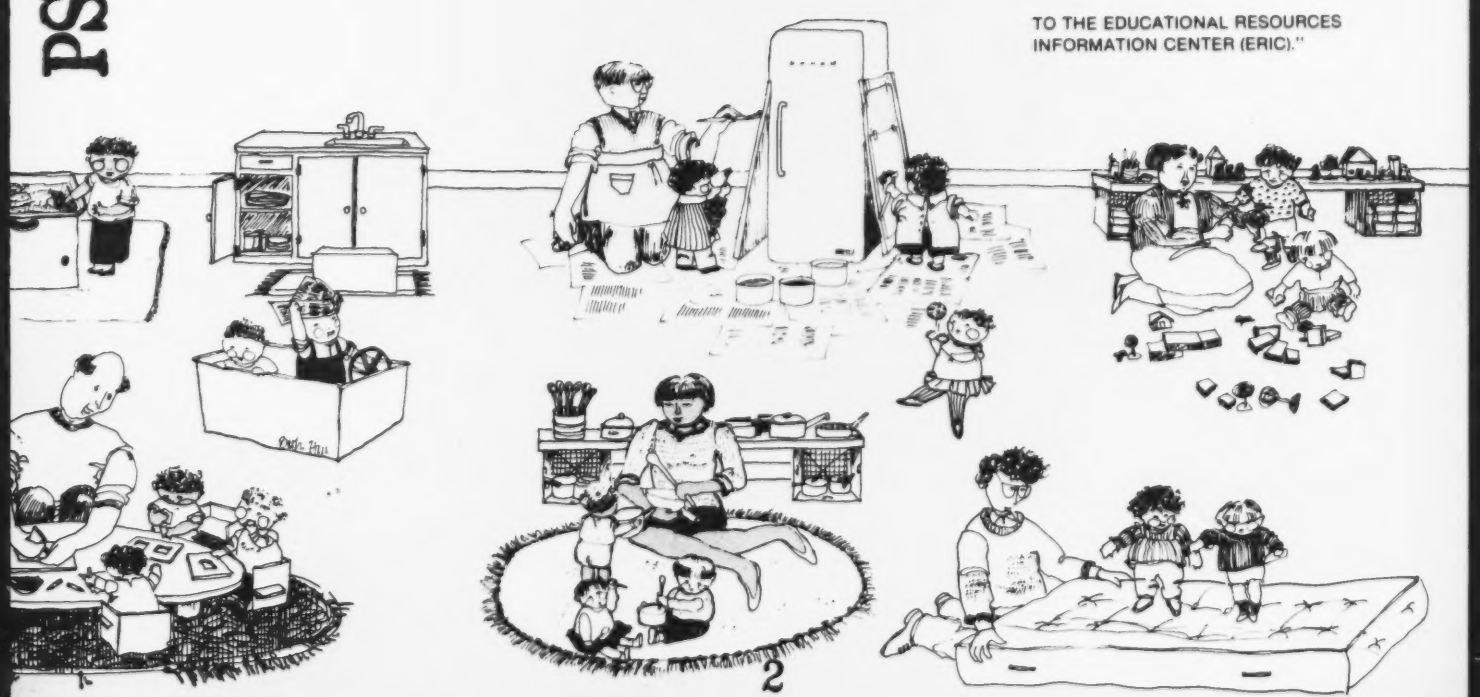
A Day in Day Care

A Program for Two-Year-Olds

by Jennifer Birckmayer

PS 016203

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Carol Doolittle
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



Produced by: Cornell University Media Services
Design: Valerie King
Illustrations: Beth Hill

The author is a senior extension associate in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, New York State College of Human Ecology, a statutory college of the state university at Cornell University.

Cooperative Extension • New York State • Cornell University

A Day in Day Care

A Program for Two-Year-Olds

by Jennifer Birckmayer

Choosing a good day care program for a 2-year-old is a puzzling problem for many parents. Teachers and caregivers, too, wonder about the kinds of activities that are most appropriate for very young children. The most important clue to the quality of a day care program is found in the feelings and the relationships of the people who participate in the program. If parents feel comfortable in the center and trust the caregivers, if caregivers feel valued and loved, and if children feel relaxed, happy, and accepted, the foundation for good care exists.

The following description of a safe and interesting day care program for 2-year-olds can be used by parents as a guide to selecting good day care; it can also be used by a day care center to stimulate discussion about program planning and implementation. Although the program described here is not perfect, it would meet New York State Department of Social Services day care licensing standards. Most early childhood educators would probably find it acceptable, although some would suggest changes or improvements.

The description is arranged by activities for the convenience of groups that wish to use it as the basis for discussion over a period of days or weeks. If, for example, staff in a day care center have limited time for discussion, they may choose to read and discuss one activity each week. Each activity can be evaluated in terms of the discussion questions provided, although some questions may not be relevant to every day care center activity. Staff also may wish to compare their program with the description. For caregivers who are interested in setting up a program or modifying an existing day care program, guidelines on selecting equipment, arranging equipment, and planning activities for toddlers also are provided.

A Day in Day Care for Two-Year-Olds

Early Morning Preparations

The big sunny room is quiet at seven-thirty in the morning. As Susan, the first caregiver on duty, enters, she pauses a moment to enjoy the silence. After the children arrive the room will be full of the sounds of busy small people. Susan checks the bulletin board for special notices, then begins preparations for the daily program. First, she fills the water table with warm water, sliding the top on again so that it will not be discovered until both caregivers are ready. Next, she takes down two trays of toys washed by the afternoon caregiver the previous day and left to air-dry overnight. Susan places them quickly on the toy shelves. Not all the toys are washed every day but the items children find particularly attractive to chew or suck are gathered up in dishpans, disinfected, and rinsed. Susan also mixes thick black paint in small juice cans and puts them on a high shelf available for a late afternoon painting session. She sets up morning snack trays with bananas, plastic knives, small plastic glasses, paper napkins, and sponges. Finally, she checks to be sure the changing table is in order and well-equipped with disposable diapers, washcloths, extra clothes, and a stack of clean white papers to use as fresh changing surfaces for each child. As she completes these preparations the first children and their parents enter the room.

Early Arrivals

Melinda is large for 18 months. Stuffed into a red snowsuit, she staggers into the room, thumb firmly in mouth, glowering out from under a wooly white hat. A ragged receiving blanket is wadded up under her arm, but her free hand moves one corner of the blanket across her face in a slow, rhythmic fashion. Melinda's mother looks at Susan and shakes her head. "All I can say is good luck. We've had two temper tantrums and no breakfast so far today—I don't know what's gotten into her. The alarm didn't go off so we overslept and I'd swear she just tried to make me late for work." She fills in the short parent's report form on Melinda and under "mood" checks the unhappiest face ☹. Stooping, she kisses her daughter briefly, says "Bye hon, don't be too rough on them in here," shakes her head again at Susan, and leaves quickly.

James, who entered with Melinda, is in a very different kind of mood. He allows his father to remove his snowsuit and then, with a beaming smile, heads directly for the housekeeping corner where he bustles about setting the small table with dishes and pots and pans from the play cupboard. As his father checks his son's chart, James begins to shout "Cup coffee da da? Coffee? Coffee?" "OK James, I'll have a quick cup before I go to work," his father replies, perching on one of the tiny chairs in the housekeeping area. James chuckles, carefully fills a cup with pretend coffee and carries it to his father who "drinks" it quickly, gives James a kiss and a "Thanks, James," and leaves. "Cup coffee Sue Sue?" James calls and Susan enters the game, watching Melinda out of the corner of

one eye and wondering how to approach her. James appears to believe in the direct approach. "Cup coffee 'Lin?" he calls. Melinda shakes her head, scowling, and then turns to watch the arrival of three more children.

Philip is carried in by his mother who quickly divests him of his outdoor clothes, gives him a pat, fills in his chart, and leaves with a big wave to Susan. Betsy is also carried in, red in the face and howling, by her mother. "She wants to stay outside and stamp on ice," her mother explains as she puts Betsy on the floor and yanks her boots off, saying crossly, "You stop your noise, young lady, or I'll give you something to cry about!" She strips Betsy of snow pants, jacket, mittens, and scarf and angrily fills in the chart. Betsy rolls about the floor, yelling lustily and trying to kick her mother. Susan intercedes. "Betsy," she says firmly, leaning over to pick up the screaming child, "when you can hear me I want to tell you about the ice in our play yard." Betsy quiets briefly and Susan addresses several of the other children who are observing Betsy with grave interest. "When we go outside later," Susan continues, "we are going to find a big patch of ice and we are going to STAMP on it with our feet—like this." Susan begins to make heavy stamping tracks around the room. She is quickly followed by Betsy, whose sobs have subsided, and by Philip. James leaves the doll corner to join them, waving a coffee pot in his hand, and Eric and Diane fall in behind imitating Susan as she chants "Stamp on the ice! Stamp on the ice!"

By this time, Liz, the second caregiver, has arrived and, after a brief amused glance at the stamping procession, looks at Melinda who is still wearing her snowsuit and then looks with raised eyebroows at Susan. Susan shakes her head and mouths the words, "Bad day so far," and Liz turns her attention to Leona, who is draped over her father's shoulder and apparently just waking up. "She fell asleep in the car" he explains, lowering his daughter gently to the floor where she whimpers, holding up her arms to be picked up. "Hi, Leona," Liz calls softly picking her up and sitting down in one of the big rocking chairs. "Shall we sing some songs while you wake up?" Leona closes her eyes and leans against Liz. Diane comes over and scrambles up on Liz's lap, too. As Liz sings she gently removes Leona's snowsuit and changes the song to a "Hello, Peter, Hello, Jackie," as two more children enter the room with their parents.

Procedure Upon Arrival

The center policy is that parents remove the children's outdoor clothes and check to be sure that their diapers are dry upon arrival. Parents also dress the children for departure in the afternoon. Susan and Liz interpret this policy rather casually for the parents of children in their toddler group. In their experience, transition from home to center in the morning is difficult for many toddlers who often resist being undressed immediately upon arrival. Susan and Liz have explained to parents that, although it's helpful for them when parents remove snowsuits and change diapers, it is not essential if a child finds it upsetting. Melinda does not appear to be a "morning person." She often arrives in a grumpy mood that becomes worse if parents and caregivers shower her with attention and attempt to move her into activities too quickly. She seems to need some time to observe, to suck her thumb, and wipe her face with her blanket before she can comfortably move into the group. The individual tempo and styles with which children arrive in the morning are subjects of great interest to Susan and are reasons she enjoys being the first caregiver on duty in the morning. Occasionally, she and Liz feel guilty because arrivals and greetings seem to be all they can manage during the first hour of the day. Gradually, however, they have begun to accept the need for a quiet, slow beginning to the day—a time when familiar toys and people allow toddlers to leave their parents and move into day care at their own pace, without the stimulation and excitement of new experiences or planned activities to confuse them.

First Activity of the Day

Soon after eight-thirty the director enters with the message that Carlos is sick and will be absent. Susan and Liz will have "only" nine toddlers. As director, Kathleen Saunders regrets that administrative duties do not allow her sufficient time to spend with children. Now, however, she remains with the toddler group as Susan and Liz begin the first planned activity of the day—the water table. Children are approached individually and asked if they would like to play in the water. If a child nods or says yes the toddler goes over to the changing table for a diaper change (if necessary) and a smock. When four children are ready, they "help" Susan remove the heavy wooden cover from the water table and begin to scoop up the warm water with an abundant supply of coffee scoops, plastic cups, and funnels. James retrieves his coffee pot from the doll corner and fills it with water. Peter attempts to play without a smock and gives a mighty yell when Liz removes him to the changing table. Leona fills a cup and drinks it straight down—a practice the caregivers do not approve but do not seem able to stop. Melinda, still in her snowsuit and hat, begins to edge closer and Susan says softly to her, "Come over to the changing table and we'll get you ready for the water." Melinda allows herself to be undressed, dons a smock, and, as she begins to pour water from one cup into another, her face relaxes and the early morning scowl disappears. Kathleen has provided invaluable help for these few minutes when the presence of a third adult makes the difference between chaos and a smooth transition. When seven children are happily engaged at the water table, Kathleen sees that Eric has climbed into the large cardboard box in one corner of the room and is having a quiet time alone, thumb-in-mouth. Betsy is sitting on the floor in front of a toy shelf busily taking apart several stacking toys. For the moment, the toddler room is peaceful and the director can go back to her office.

While the children play, the caregivers kneel beside them talking quietly about the blue, red, and yellow cups, about the good warm feeling of the water, and about the funnels, scoops, and bottles. Several children "converse" in languages of their own, or identify objects with a single word and occasionally with two-word sentences such as "James cup" or "Betsy drink." After about 20 minutes of relaxed and peaceful play, Philip looks Liz straight in the eye and pours a cup full of water on the floor at her feet. "Philip," Liz says firmly, "Keep the water in the water table" and she steers him and the cup in the appropriate direction. Philip obeys momentarily, and then, with a wide grin, smacks his hand into the water, eliciting shouts of pleasure from Melinda and Peter who promptly imitate Philip by smacking their hands into the water. The resulting shower drenches every child except those who were not at the water table. Susan and Liz put the wooden cover on saying, "Too bad we're splashing. Now we have to put the table away. Water stays in the water table." As quickly as possible they lift each child onto a carpeted area in the room, hoping to avoid falls as a result of the slippery water on the floor. The toddlers appear undisturbed by the abrupt termination of their activity, except for Melinda who struggles hard to remove the water table cover and scowls at Liz when she tries to lead her to the rug. "I know you like the water, Melinda," Liz says cheerfully. "But when people splash we have to put the water table away." She offers Melinda a four-piece wooden puzzle and at the same time removes Melinda's smock and her wet overalls. Changing seven wet children while at the same time offering toys and maintaining a calm, pleasant manner requires skill and teamwork. Susan and Liz have worked together for several months and accomplish the task as smoothly as possible.

Snack Time

After a short play time with the blocks, trucks, push toys, dolls, and puzzles, it's snack time. This is a popular activity—and the only activity other than lunch and nap time in which all the children participate at the same time. Two children help the caregivers "clean up for snack" by throwing toys onto shelves. Eric, however, at 19 months, does not see the

need to put things away and pulls the large cardboard blocks onto the floor as quickly as Susan places them on a shelf. Laughing, Susan picks Eric up for a big hug and a kiss, carries him to the snack table, and settles him in a chair that has his special bib hanging over the back. Liz and the other children soon join them, and the toddlers sit in their chairs waiting patiently for a caregiver to tie bibs around their necks. As they do so, Susan and Liz explain that there will be bananas for snack, and that everyone will have a knife and may, if they wish, cut the banana into slices before eating it. James greets this announcement with great excitement, pounding on the table and shouting "'nana." Betsy leaves the table and attempts to take a knife from the snack tray. Melinda holds out her hand pleadingly to Liz, while Peter and Eric stare at each other, noses touching, until Susan places half a peeled banana on a paper plate in front of each of them. Saying "Look, boys, here are your bananas," she engages their attention in the task at hand. After poking tentatively at his banana with the knife, Eric picks it up and eats it in large bites. Leona, on the other hand, is fascinated by cutting. She slices her banana in half, then cuts each slice into smaller and smaller pieces, apparently uninterested in eating any of it. Diana picks up her piece of fruit, perhaps grasping it more firmly than she had intended. Mashed banana oozes from between her fingers and she licks it off her hand. Here again each toddler displays a unique style and a varying interest in snack time. Some see it as a business-like eating experience, others enjoy the knives as tools and care not a whit for eating, and others are entranced by the sticky gooiness of bananas and seize upon snack time as a mixture of what might be considered science-art. The caregivers accept each child's interest and behavior. Snack is presented so that those who are hungry will have a chance to eat. There is no pressure to eat, neither are children prohibited from using the knives and the bananas to design their own learning experiences. Susan and Liz sit at the two low tables with the children, slicing and eating their own bananas and passing out small glasses of milk that the toddlers are free to drink or not to drink.

As snack time ends, Liz glances at the clock and sees that it is almost ten o'clock. "Almost our turn for the big room," she announces. "When we're all washed up we'll go to the big room." Several toddlers immediately leave the table and go to the sink where each has a washcloth and towel hanging on hooks. Susan goes with them, removing bibs, sponging sticky hands and faces, and changing diapers as needed. As children are ready they cluster by the door, until Liz and Susan sing a "going down the hall" song and the toddlers begin their slow procession. A distance of about 50 feet takes longer than an observer might expect. Eric squats to examine a leaf on the floor, disregarding Susan's attempts to move him along. Two children turn in at the office and have to be retrieved by Liz. The door of the 4-year-old room is open and several of the "big kids" swarm into the hall to greet and hug the "babies." Finally they arrive at the big room where the 3-year-olds are already busy with trikes, wagons, balls, and a low slide.

Toddlers Visit Another Room

Liz leaves Susan and the two caregivers of the 3-year-olds to supervise the children as she darts back to the toddler room to clean up the snack tables, wipe the bibs, and put the toys away. When Liz returns to the big room, one of the 3-year-olds' caregivers will leave to accomplish the same tasks in their room.

In the big room many of the differences between 2- and 3-year-olds become evident. Three-year-olds are much bigger and more purposeful in their activities. They pull wagons,

climb the ladder to the slide, sit down and slide down, and hurl balls. The 2-year-olds enjoy the space and spend time toddling, quickly or slowly, around in it. Occasionally, a 2-year-old picks up a ball and throws it, pulls a wagon for a few seconds, or laboriously climbs the four-step ladder to the slide. Many need help to remember to sit down to descend the slide; several need reminders to come down at all as they are quite likely to sit on the platform, oblivious to the fact that they are very much in the way of children coming up behind them. The increased noise and the stimulating company of the 3-year-olds is too much for Eric who holds up his arms, begging to be carried. Susan establishes him on her hip, and then persuades him to sit on a soft cushion in a wagon with two other children while she pulls them very slowly around the room.

Storytime for Toddlers

Twenty minutes in another room provides a welcome change for both caregivers and toddlers, but at the end of this brief period they are pleased to return to their own room. As they enter, Susan establishes herself in the book corner and invites several children to join her. Most of the children love books and often choose to sit on the bean-bag chairs or cushions in the book area to "read." While Susan shows them a book about animals, making appropriate comments as she turns each page, Melinda and James watch carefully. Eric and Diane, on the other hand, ignore the book that is being "read," turn their backs on Susan, and leaf through books of their own choosing. Betsy is pushing a doll carriage around the room but makes periodic stops to look at the pages Susan holds up. Leona lies on a mat, back to Susan, eyes closed and thumb-in-mouth, but appears to be listening. At the end of the story, however, Leona is asleep, and Liz brings her cot into the room, places Leona on it, and covers her with a blanket.

While Susan is occupied in the book area, Liz keeps her eye on children in several different places. Philip works hard to fit a collection of small blocks into a doll carriage. Peter crawls in and out of the large cardboard box, peeking out through the window each time he is inside. Jackie has taken some nesting toys to a table and needs help to assemble them. Liz makes a mental note that the toys are too complicated and that some of the smaller parts should be in the storage closet for now.

In many ways this period is most often thought of as the heart of the day. Children have arrived and settled in; they are not yet tired or hungry and their play is serious and deeply absorbing. The caregivers try hard not to be so busy with the endless diaper changing and cleaning-up activities that they fail to enjoy and participate in the children's experiences. Particularly in the toddler group, attention spans are so brief that a caregiver can miss important interactions between children or "teachable moments" unless they are alert and observing carefully all the time.

End of the Morning

As Susan turns to choose another book she manages to catch Liz's eye and gestures to Eric. He has crawled over to Melinda and, very gently, put his forefinger to her lips. Melinda seems to understand that she is to open her mouth, and she keeps it open while Eric, with great interest, peers in and touches each of her teeth in turn. When he has finished, he squats back on his heels and again, very gently, touches her lips. Melinda closes her mouth and picks up another book.

At eleven o'clock a senior citizen volunteer arrives to spend an hour with the toddlers. She enjoys playing with children in the housekeeping corner and, when James sees her, he rushes to the play stove calling "Coffee, Gramma? Coffee?" Gramma accepts his invitation and soon several other children are putting dishes and pots on the table, taking them off, and offering Gramma "tastes" from the utensils they carry. Susan takes advantage of her arrival to slip out to the bathroom and a 5-minute coffee break in the kitchen. When she returns, she reminds Betsy of her promise that they will go outside to stamp on the ice and suggests that Betsy find her snowsuit now. Betsy says no and continues to cover a doll with several pieces of cloth she takes from shelves in the doll corner. Susan next approaches James, Eric, and Diane with the same invitation. James and Diane run to find their snowsuits, but Eric simply grins and goes off to climb inside the box again. Jackie and Melinda also get their snowsuits, and Susan takes the four children outside to spend 15 minutes stamping on the ice.

The absence of five people from the room provides another important change of pace. The atmosphere is quieter and the room seems bigger. Gramma and three of the children in the doll corner have begun to work on large wooden puzzles. Eric continues to crawl in and out of the box, while Liz invites Melinda to help her get the room ready for lunch. This involves putting toys away, cleaning tables and wiping them, and hanging each child's bib over the back of a chair at that child's lunch place. Melinda knows exactly where each person sits and also identifies accurately each child's bib, so she can be a real help to Liz. Melinda enjoys these few minutes alone with Liz and beams when Liz stoops to give her a hug and a kiss.

Lunchtime

Gradually Liz moves from one child to another, checking diapers and washing hands without interrupting the peaceful, busy activities. Gramma and her little group are doing a toddler version of "Eensy Weensy Spider" when Susan and the ice smashers arrive back inside with rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes. As she removes James' snowsuit, Susan discovers he has had a large and messy bowel movement, necessitating not only a diaper change but clean pants and socks—and, somehow, a cleanup of his snowsuit. "James" she says, "Let's go down to the nurse's office to clean you up." She and James depart and Liz smiles at Gramma. "Thank goodness you're here today" she says, "I'd really be in a pickle right now without you." Together she and Gramma seat children at the table as the lunch cart rolls into the room. Gramma sits in Susan's place and places tiny portions of

meatloaf, squash, green beans, and noodles on each child's plate. This is a popular lunch and the toddlers are quiet as they concentrate on the serious business of eating. Peter understands that he is supposed to use a spoon and carefully places each bit of food on the spoon with his fingers before conveying it to his mouth. Eric ignores all utensils but scoops up his food with both hands and, within a few minutes, holds out his plate for more. Jackie likes only the meat and whimpers when her first helping is gone. Liz provides her with more small pieces of meatloaf, saying, "I think you like beans, Jackie." After the children have satisfied their immediate hunger, the adults encourage them to help themselves to seconds. Lunch is a pleasant, relaxed occasion although only the caregivers do much talking. The children concentrate entirely on their food until Melinda leans back in her chair and belches loudly. Peter attempts to imitate her and both children giggle. Diane, seated between them, does not appear to see the joke and continues to eat.

Preparation for Naps

Susan and James reappear and James runs quickly to his lunch place. Susan and Liz agree that if Susan will put out the cots for nap, she will have a chance to eat lunch while the children sleep. Kathleen Saunders joins them briefly after lunch when all available help is needed to get the toddlers changed, washed (lunch spreads into hair, ears, and elbows on many of them!), and down for naps. Although there is much to do, the caregivers attempt to work slowly and quietly, thus helping children move easily to their cots. James often resists being put to bed, so Liz and Susan ask Gramma to remain with him at the lunch table while they tuck in the others.

Eric happily settles on his cot with a bottle of juice. His eyes close quickly and he is instantly asleep. Melinda wants to work a puzzle and squawks loudly in protest when Liz attempts to lead her to her cot. "OK Melinda. Finish your puzzle and I'll put your special blanket on your bed and get it ready for you," Liz tells her. Philip and Betsy also sleep with special objects from home: Philip has a worn teddy and Betsy has an old and ragged diaper. Jackie takes a pacifier to bed and Diane twists a strand of hair as she settles herself for sleep. Each child is tucked in carefully and lovingly by the adults, who kiss them goodnight and sit on the floor between the cots to rub backs and offer help in going to sleep. Gramma and James spend a few minutes clearing tables and wiping them with sponges, and then Liz asks James to choose a record to listen to while he settles on his cot. Within fifteen minutes every child is asleep.

Susan goes to the kitchen with the lunch cart and remains there to have her own lunch. Liz cleans the tables and chairs, sweeps the floor in the lunch area, and washes the bibs. She then collects the children's charts and records information for the parents to review at departure time. This information includes details about the amount of food each child has consumed, the number of bowel movements, and other details that may be helpful to parents as they strive for continuity of care between center and home. Today Liz records Leona's midmorning nap and jots a note to James' parents about his large, loose stool in case it is an early warning of an intestinal upset. She also writes a brief description of Eric's interaction with Melinda as Eric's parents are particularly interested in Eric's "social relationships." On Melinda's chart Liz draws a happy face: " ☺ after about nine-thirty," and adds, "very patient with Eric's explorations of her teeth. Good helper before lunch." When Susan returns she jots brief notes on children she has been particularly involved with and notes on the charts of children who went outside with her. "Smashed ice in play yard from 11:30 to 11:45 this morning." In this way the caregivers try to tell parents something about their children's activities and experiences in day care. Three and 4-year-olds can sometimes provide verbal cues to parents about important events at the center, but the 2-year-olds' language skills are very limited. Their life in day care can be largely unknown to parents unless painstaking efforts are undertaken by their caregivers. Susan and Liz are particularly careful to provide information to parents whose children got off to a bad start that day. Today they will try to give "good news" about Melinda and Betsy.

Nap Time

After their notes are completed Liz leaves the room for a coffee break, and Susan repairs two books that were torn during morning storytime. She then puts black paint, big brushes, and smocks at the two tiny easels she takes out of the storage chest. She also checks each child's outdoor apparel to be sure that mittens, scarves, and hats will be available and dry when the children need them. She and Liz have a chance for a brief conversation before the children wake up. Susan shares her concern that Leona has fallen asleep during the morning once before this week and wonders if she is sleeping poorly at home or if the toddler program is overstimulating for her. They agree to request a conference with Leona's mother if she falls asleep during the morning again. They also agree that they find Melinda's early morning crossness difficult to cope with, but that their decision to allow Melinda to move into activities at her own rate seems to be working out better than their earlier attempts to cajole her into a more cheerful mood. Liz also tells Susan about her latest adventures in looking for a new apartment, and Susan tells Liz about the movie she had seen the night before. These caregivers conscientiously avoid personal conversations when they are working with the children, but they are good friends and enjoy a few minutes to be "regular people" each afternoon—an activity warmly encouraged by the director, who believes her staff functions most effectively when their relationships with one another are pleasant and friendly.

Waking-up

At about two-thirty, Leona wakes up and immediately gets off her cot, staggering toward the caregivers on unsteady legs. Liz picks her up and sits down in a rocking chair to sing and cuddle. No one else wakes until three o'clock when James sits up, yawns loudly, and tumbles across the floor to join Leona on Liz's lap. Susan intercepts him for a diaper change and discovers that he has had another copious bowel movement that must be noted on his chart. As children awake, Sue changes their diapers and they gravitate to Liz who has moved to the story corner and is singing softly as she helps children find books. The atmosphere is calm and relaxed—almost slow, for toddlers are heavy sleepers and the transition from sleep to wakefulness must occur gradually. Susan stacks cots as children leave them. Slowly the children move out into the room, although several remain with Liz in the book area. Jackie begins to work with large cardboard blocks, methodically lining them up across the floor. Peter sits down on the floor with a brightly colored barn and methodically puts animals in through the door, carefully closing it after each animal. Eric returns to the big box, currently his favorite place in the room. To his obvious delight, Melinda follows him and they play peekaboo through the window. Philip tugs anxiously at Susan's jeans, trying hard to make her understand what he is saying. She stoops to see he has a wooden puzzle piece in his hand. "Philip! You found the lost puzzle piece. Let's put it back in the puzzle," and together they go to look for the puzzle. Leona pushes a doll carriage around and around the room and is joined by Betsy, pushing another carriage. As Liz's story group drifts away, Liz half-fills small paper cups with water and goes to each child, offering a drink. Several shake their heads, but others drink the water and hold out their cups for more.

Painting Time and End-of-Day Routine

As children lose interest in an activity or toy, Liz invites them to put on a smock and paint. Most of the toddlers paint for about 60 seconds and are finished, but Philip is fascinated by the thick black paint and remains at the easel for several minutes, apparently attempting to cover the entire surface of his paper with paint. When everyone has been offered an opportunity to paint, Liz again invites Betsy to go outside to stamp on ice. This time Betsy runs for her snowsuit and is joined by three more children. While Liz dresses them, Susan prepares to leave and Pat, the part-time aide who works at the end of the day, comes in to replace her. Pat is greeted enthusiastically by the children who cluster around babbling in many toddler languages about going to the "big room," for this is where they will spend the last part of the day. They are wide awake now and ready for active play. Pat takes them down the hall and they burst into the big room where they hold hands with Pat for a brief game of "ring-around-the-rosy." They all enjoy running after the balls that Pat rolls across the floor for them. Philip and Melinda run after the same ball and collide, falling on the floor in a heap while both scream. Just as Pat reaches them to provide comfort with hugs and kisses, there is a loud howl from Eric who has struggled onto a tricycle and now cannot get off. Stopping briefly to rescue Eric, Pat realizes that a very strong odor indicates that James needs another diaper change. As she is the only adult in the room, James will have to wait. Pat is comforting Philip and Melinda when the first parent arrives, snowsuit in hand, to collect Eric. "Whew!" exclaims Eric's mother, "Someone in here needs clean pants!" and she upends her son briefly to see if he is the offender.

At this point Liz and her group of ice stampers appear and Pat leaves quickly with James. She sticks her head in the office door and asks one of the secretaries to help Liz for a few minutes with a tray of small cups of juice and crackers. The children sit on the mats for this brief snack, except for Eric, whose mother is in a hurry to leave. Eric protests loudly and Liz gives him a cracker to eat in the car. Pat and James gather up the empty cups and return them to the kitchen on the way to change James' pants. Two more parents arrive to claim Melinda and Philip. Melinda's mother is smiling over the notes the caregivers have written on Melinda's chart, and her smile broadens as Melinda greets her with a big hug. "Did she really have a good day?" she asks. When Liz nods, she picks up her small daughter and kisses her warmly. Philip struggles to explain something to his father and Liz interprets "Are you telling Dad about your black painting?" As the group dwindles in size, the children tumble over Liz on the mat much as puppies tumble over one another as they play. Pat remains in the toddler room with James, collecting toys to wash at the end of the day. When they have finished she relieves Liz, whose caregiving day is over. Pat will stay with the remaining four children until their parents arrive. She will then straighten the big room, wash the toys, and leave the toddler room in order for Susan's early morning arrival.

Guidelines for Discussion

If you are leading a discussion group that is either evaluating a day care program or planning to set up a new program, you may find that the following guidelines help to stimulate your thinking about program planning or evaluation.

1. Read through A Day in Day Care.
2. If you are leading a large group, break into subgroups. Each subgroup can be responsible for reading, critiquing, and reporting to the total group on different activities in the day care description.
3. It is helpful if each subgroup reads the entire description of a 2-year-old's day in day care although the subgroup will take responsibility for critiquing only one section. If this is not possible, the leader should give a short verbal summary of the day care program description to the entire group so that participants understand how their section fits into the total day care program.
4. When discussing each day care activity, consider the following questions:
    - Did the caregivers' actions seem realistic and appropriate? What might they have done differently?
    - How would you describe the atmosphere of the 2-year-old room? If it should be different, how would you change it?
    - Were the activities in the 2-year-old room: Appropriate for toddlers? Interesting for toddlers? Educational for toddlers?

      If so, how? If not, why not?
    - How did the caregivers provide for the individual needs, paces, and styles of the children? Can you think of any ways in which they might have individualized care more than they did?
    - Which of the following disciplinary techniques did caregivers use with the children?
        - Creating a safe and interesting environment.
        - Individualizing activities (not requiring all the children to participate in the same activity at the same time).
        - Allowing children to express negative moods and feelings as long as they did not hurt themselves or anyone else.
        - Offering positive directions (telling children what they can do and avoiding unnecessary use of the word no).
        - Cuddling, holding, and using physical contact to change or reinforce children's behavior.
        - Moving around the room with children (and not supervising from one spot in the room).
        - Planning an appropriate mix of active or quiet activities and providing adequate rest and nourishment.
        - Maintaining toys, materials, and equipment in safe, attractive condition and storing them in an orderly fashion where they are available to children.
        - Avoiding too much waiting time for children.
        - Demonstrating, through their own behavior and language, what healthy, self-disciplined people are like.
        - Expressing love, acceptance, and encouragement.

Setting Up a Day Care Program for Two-Year-Olds

Staff and parents who care about the educational quality of a day care program wonder whether they should plan educational lessons for 2-year-olds. It seems that education must be implicit in a day care center's environment, its program, and the interpersonal relationships of staff, parents, and children. Toddlers learn all the time; they do not distinguish one part of the day as more or less educational than another. For a very young child, learning to use and control her body, to leave home and participate as a member of a group, to eat meals with other children, to be changed and cuddled by an adult she is learning to trust, to sleep in a strange environment, and to investigate an interesting new environment with specially designed equipment and materials add up to a total experience that is educational in the best sense of the word. That is, the child begins to see herself as a competent, successful human being whose opinions and needs are respected by others and whose attempts to learn about the world through direct sensory contact are supported and encouraged by caregiving adults.

A good day care program requires sensitivity in relating to children and parents. It also requires a careful selection and arrangement of materials and equipment. A toddler room, although much simpler than an open classroom for older children, should be carefully planned and equipped. Too often, the toddler room of a day care center is equipped with a rocking horse, a motley collection of stuffed animals, and quantities of broken miscellaneous toys kept helter-skelter in a toy chest. Arrangement of space and equipment can be based on the same principles as those of any classroom: activity areas or centers of interest should be created with learning materials stored neatly and attractively on low open shelves with most of these accessible to the children. Cardboard puzzles with missing pieces, torn books, ragged dolls, or trucks with missing wheels should be repaired or discarded. Toddlers will be quick to sense from adults any feelings that objects in the room are "only toys" and so are not very important. If adults organize the room well and demonstrate concern and respect for the materials and toys, toddlers will imitate their behavior and eventually learn to care for their own environments.

Criteria for Selecting Equipment and Materials for Toddlers

- All equipment should be simple, durable, and scaled to the physical comfort of tiny children (chairs 6 to 8 inches from the floor, tables 10 to 12 inches).
- All equipment should be flexible and usable in more than one way. For example, a simple truck that children can sit on or load with blocks is preferable to a fancy wind-up car that can only be used in one way. A plain rubber doll that can be dressed and washed is preferable to a rag doll with stitched-on clothes.
- All equipment should be considered in light of the total program. Care must be taken to avoid purchasing all quiet games or puzzles, for instance, or all push-pull toys, or all equipment designed for active, "big-muscle" play. Variety in equipment helps to develop different skills.
- Large equipment must be flexible and safe for 2-year-olds' experimental climbing and crawling. Two empty cable spools, a smoothly sanded board, and a short, safe length of ladder offer a greater variety of activities than an elaborate expensive climber.
- All equipment should be well-designed, have no sharp edges or pinch places, and, if painted, paint must be lead-free.

Commercial backyard jungle gyms or swing sets are not recommended for a group of toddlers. If one is donated, swing seats should be replaced with tires or canvas sling seats, because toddlers are likely to run or back into a moving swing. Teeter-totters or seesaws are not desirable, as one toddler is quite likely to get off in midair, leaving his partner to thud to the ground abruptly.

Setting Up the Room

Usually, the day care staff begins with a rather bland, general environment. It may be helpful to make a sketch of the room including areas for sleeping, eating, diaper changing and washing, and seven basic activity areas:

1. Book and story telling area.

A bright washable rug, some pillows, and a low bookcase with a dozen books clearly displayed are all this area needs. Book display shelves in a toddler room should contain only a few books at a time. Toddlers may use the books more if they are displayed face out. Staff members should rotate books every week or so, putting away books children do not seem to enjoy, putting out a few new ones, and leaving favorites on the shelves. When they are looking at books, toddlers may be more comfortable on rugs or soft pillows than on chairs. They also enjoy sitting on an adult's lap. Toddlers may have their own styles of looking at books: some want to point to pictures and identify objects in the pictures; some enjoy telling a familiar story as they turn the pages; still others may snuggle up to an adult, often thumb-in-mouth, and listen while the caregiver reads or talks about the pictures. It is rarely possible for one adult to use books effectively with more than two or three toddlers at a time because interest and attention spans vary enormously.

Suggested Books for Toddlers

Allen, Marie. Baby's Playthings. Platt & Munk, 1967.
Allen, Marie. Baby's Things. Platt & Munk, 1967.
Baker, Betty F. What is Black? Watts, 1969.
Baruch, Dorothy. Pitter Patter. William E. Scott, 1943.
Bridwell, Norman. Clifford the Big Red Dog. Scholastic, 1967.
Browner, Richard. Everyone Has a Name. Henry Z. Walck, 1961.
Brown, Margaret Wise. Baby Animals. Golden, 1964.
Brown, Margaret Wise. Home for a Bunny. Simon & Schuster, 1957.
Carroll, Ruth. Where's the Bunny? Oxford University Press, 1950.
Epstein, Sam and Beryl. Who Needs Holes? Hawthorne Books, 1970.
Flack, Marjorie. Ask Mr. Bear. Macmillan, 1932.
Green, Mary M. Everybody Eats. Scott, 1961.
Keats, Ezra Jack. Peter's Chair. Harper, 1967.
Keats, Ezra Jack. Snowy Day. Viking, 1962.
Keats, Ezra Jack. Whistle for Willie. Viking, 1964.
Kessler, Ethel and Leonard. The Big Red Bus. Doubleday, 1957.
Kinhardt, Dorothy. Pat the Bunny. Golden Press, 1940.
Langstaff, John. Over in the Meadow. Langstaff, 1957.
Langstaff, N. My First Toys. Platt & Munk, 1955.
Petersham, Maud and Mishka. The Box with Red Wheels. Macmillan, 1949.
Skaar, Grace. What Do the Animals Say? Young Scott, 1968.
Weisgard, Leonard. Whistle for the Train. Doubleday, 1956.
Witte, Pat and Eve. Who Lives Here? Golden Press, 1961.

2. Music.

This area needs a record player, records, and some simple instruments. If space is limited, the music and story areas can be combined, although the record player and records should be stored out of children's reach.

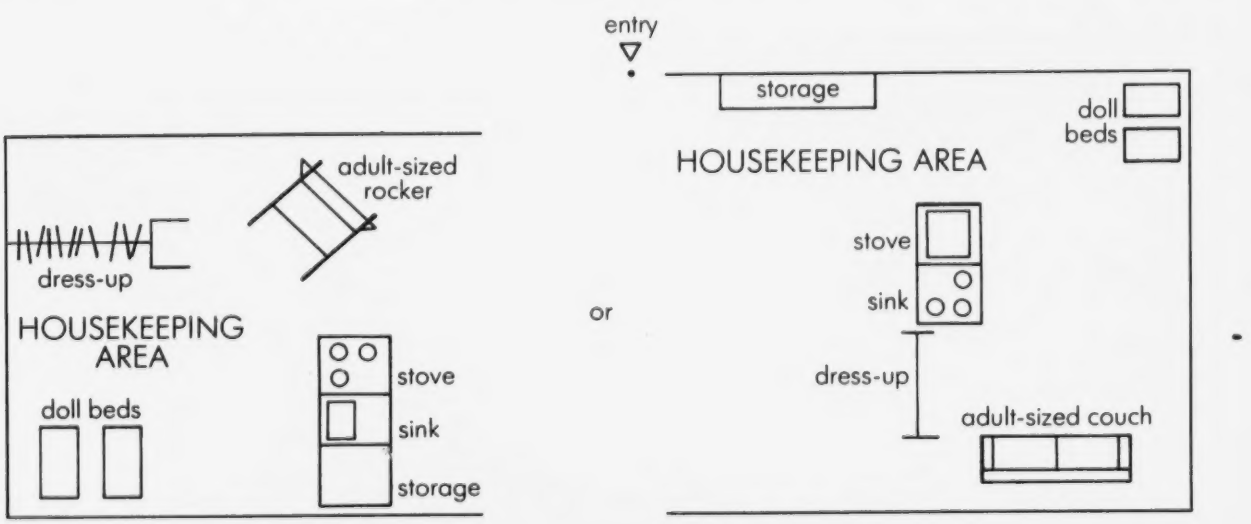
Records for Toddlers

American Folk Songs for Children: Pete Seeger, Folkways.
Babysitter's Family Album: The Babysitters, Vanguard.
Children's Corner: Frank Luther, Voccalion-Decca.
Child's First Birthday: Frank Luther, Voccalion-Decca.
Folk Songs for Babies, Small Children, Parents and Babysitters: The Babysitters, Vanguard.
I am a Circus: Young People's Records, Children's Guild.
Me, Myself & I: Young People's Records, Children's Guild.
Songs & Fun with the Babysitters: The Babysitters, Vanguard.
Visit to My Little Friend: Young People's Records, Children's Guild.

3. Housekeeping and dramatic play.

In a primitive way, toddlers enjoy housekeeping and dramatic play. This area is one where early social relationships often emerge; it is also an area with potential for language development. Basic equipment might include a sturdy play stove, sink, refrigerator (optional), several doll beds large and strong enough for children as well as dolls, a small low table, and several chairs. Accessories are vital in this area. Doll dishes, pots and pans, rubber dolls and their high chairs, carriages and simple clothing, empty food cans for pretend food, toy telephones, dress-up clothes, and a full-length mirror are materials that will turn the house into a home. Because water can be used in the play sink and in the pots and pans, cleanup equipment including mops, a pail, sponges, and waterproof smocks should be close at hand. Most centers keep large pieces of oilcloth or linoleum on the floor of the water play area and under the easel and tables where children eat. A large collection of beach towels is a helpful carpet in messy activity areas, particularly if staff members have access to a washing machine.

Housekeeping and Dramatic Play Corner



Most of this equipment can be improvised from sturdy cardboard boxes. Contact paper adds eye appeal and may increase durability.

4. Blocks.

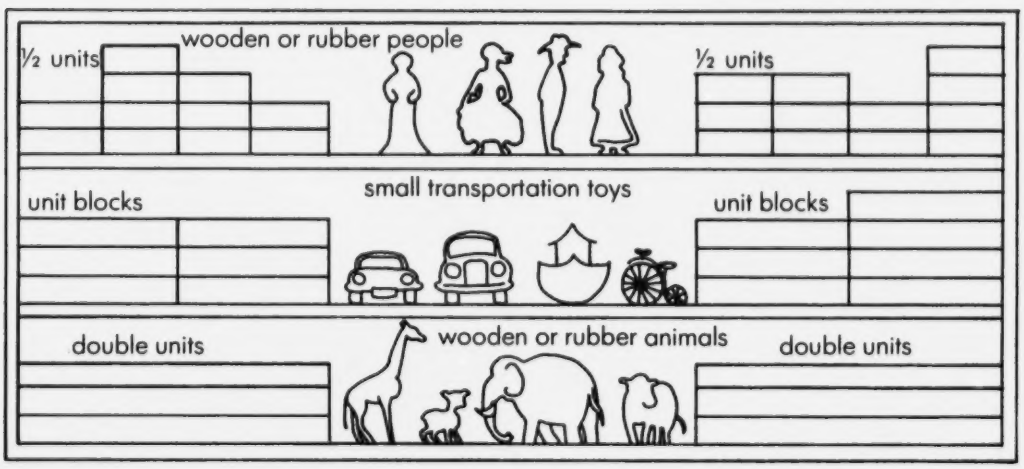
The block area in a toddler room requires particularly careful planning. In addition to providing a rich assortment of materials that children can stack or build with, the block area helps to build the skills later needed for reading and mathematics. Finding shapes that are the right size or that match the size they are holding; using the concepts of big and small; hearing adults talk about the blocks that are equal or longer than; assembling a pile of three blocks and then assembling another pile just like the first (patterning); and choosing to lay out a line of long-short-long-short blocks (sequencing) are all child-initiated activities that a sensitive staff recognizes as important and encourages in toddlers.

Prices for blocks may seem high but they are a good investment. A 4-H, Lions, Rotary, or other local service group may be persuaded to buy or make them for the center. In addition to blocks you will need some of the following accessories:

- Two large sets of sturdy rubber or wooden animals. These are catalog items. If the center's budget is limited, it is possible to use large plastic animals (be certain they stand up) that are available in most toy departments. These must be discarded when they break because the plastic is sharp.
- Twelve to fifteen small wooden, rubber, or metal cars, trucks, trains, and planes.
- Four large ride-on trucks that also can be used to transport blocks. Wooden ones are best. Be sure they have rubber wheels; wooden wheels make too much noise in a group.
- Odd scraps such as paper towel tubes, small pieces of cardboard, and short lengths of hose, are useful for embellishing block structures or for examining them for the interesting objects they are.
- The storage unit is important in this area. It should consist of a set of sturdy, well-balanced, low shelves (not necessarily the commercial ones especially designed for blocks) where blocks can be stored so that children can see sizes and shapes. If the block corner is well-organized with storage clearly indicated, toddlers will enjoy helping the teacher put the blocks away. Though adults will do most of the clean-up activity, toddlers love to imitate and to be helpers, and cleanup will often become a voluntary cooperative effort.

Blocks can be outlined on the shelves with magic marker. At clean-up time, adults and children match the shape of the block with the shape of the outline on the shelf. All the blocks that are the same size go together. Putting all the animals together on one shelf, all the transportation toys on a second shelf, and all the "people" on the

Block Shelves for Toddlers



top shelf is an easy and interesting activity that helps the child begin to develop skills in classification. Note that in the arrangement illustrated, two children can get blocks from separate but alike piles, decreasing the chance of a fight but increasing opportunities for parallel play.

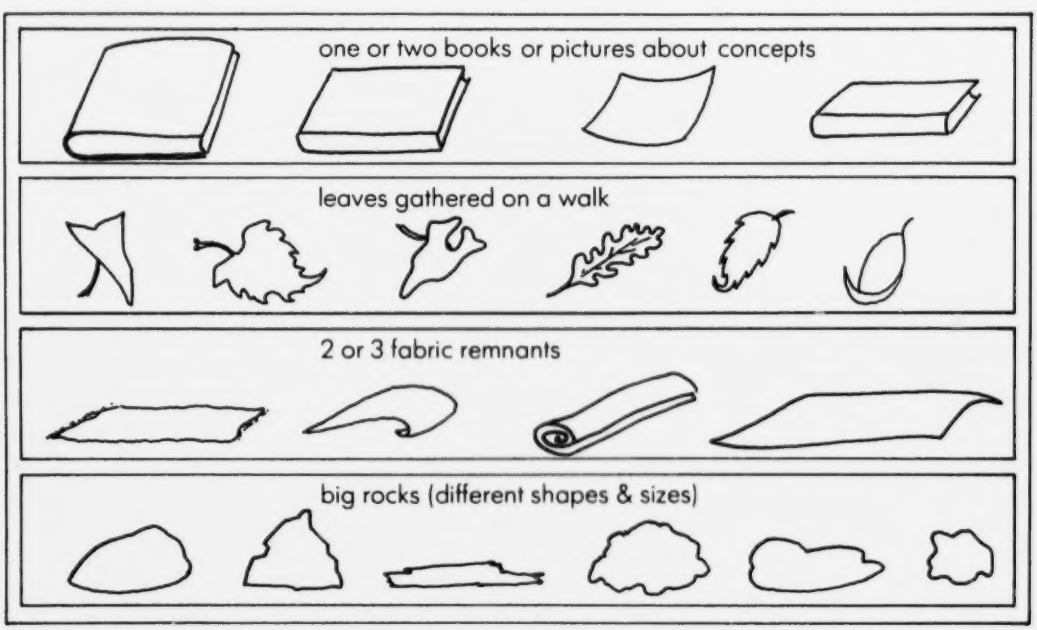
5. Science.

Science materials can change frequently or, if interest is sustained, be left for a long time. Materials will be carried around the room and incorporated into many different activities; they must be sturdy enough to withstand a great deal of handling. If science materials are lost, check the pocketbooks in the dress-up corner. Toddlers engage in scientific explorations all the time, and there is really little need to have a special science corner. But it is a useful device to help staff members be aware that very young children are interested in and capable of learning many basic science concepts.

Sample Science Activities for Toddlers

- Pouring water from one container to another.
- Painting with water.
- Collecting leaves, sticks, acorns, stones, or wild flowers.
- Making mud by mixing sand and water.
- Stacking small objects inside bigger ones (nesting tin cans, for example).
- Smelling different odors.
- Sampling different tastes.
- Cooking: instant pudding; spreading peanut butter on crackers or bread; tearing up lettuce for a salad; slicing bananas with butter knives.

Science Area


one or two books or pictures about concepts
leaves gathered on a walk
2 or 3 fabric remnants
big rocks (different shapes & sizes)

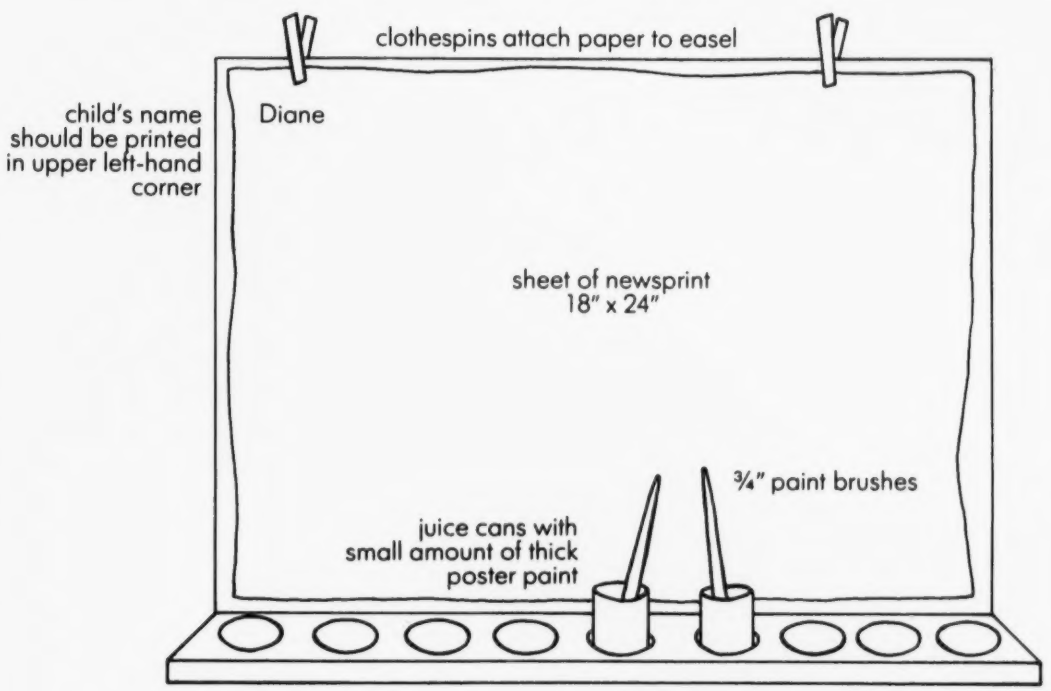
6. Art.

The clue to successful art activities is in careful preparation, including plans for cleanup. Old shirts with sleeves cut off and buttoned in the back are good smocks; for really messy activities a more waterproof apron is needed. Smocks can be made from old shower curtains or plastic tablecloths; old beach towels can be folded double, a hole cut in the fold for a head, and sashed to make protecting ponchos. Rolls of paper towels, a pan of water, sponges, and a mop are needed for most activities and these should be ready before the activity begins. Floors can be protected with several layers of newspapers, or oilcloth or linoleum. Whenever weather permits, art activities can be moved outside. If the sun is warm, toddlers can be stripped to diapers or training pants, and a follow-up session with a bowl of warm water and sponge can be fun and at the same time expedite cleanup.

Adults and even older children often encourage toddlers to "tell us what it is" when they have made a painting or played with play dough or some other art material. It is important to remember that very young children paint because they enjoy the process of painting; they roll, pat, and push play dough because they enjoy doing so, not because they are trying to create pictures or make something with the dough. Some 2- and 3-year-olds begin to name their products after they have finished making them and can see what they look like. Adults can be encouraging and supportive of a toddler's primitive attempts to manipulate materials and at the same time provide verbal labels so that the child can begin to talk about the activity. For example, an adult might say to a child (underlined words represent new vocabulary):

- "The dough is sticky today."
- "You are patting the dough hard."
- "Your painting is all blue today."
- "The paint is dripping from the brush."

Art Easel


clothespins attach paper to easel
child's name should be printed in upper left-hand corner
Diane
sheet of newsprint 18" x 24"
¾" paint brushes
juice cans with small amount of thick poster paint

It is not essential to have a special painting easel. Children will enjoy painting large sheets of paper spread over several layers of newspaper on the floor. An easel takes up little space, however, and preparation and cleanup are much easier than for floor painting. Easels can be easily made or improvised from wood or cardboard. A clothesline or clothes drying rack can be placed nearby so that paintings can be hung up to dry. Finished paintings may be taken home or hung on the wall for all to admire.

Other Art Activities for Toddlers

Pasting.
: Toddlers often prefer to put a mound of paste on paper, and then either smear (like finger paint) or stick things (stones, sticks, feathers, fabric scraps) into it.

Play dough.
: Three cups of flour mixed with 1 cup of salt and enough water to make the mixture like pie dough can be squeezed, rolled, patted, or poked. Toddlers have also been known to eat play dough with no harm.

Finger painting.
: For brave staff members, the easiest and most enjoyable finger paint may well be 3 tablespoons of chocolate pudding on a clean cafeteria tray. (It must be explained to the toddler that this is a special time and that usually pudding is eaten out of a bowl with a spoon.) For adults who cannot accept food as an art material, liquid starch may be an acceptable finger paint.

Stringing large macaroni on strings.

Painting a building or a piece of play equipment with water and a 2-inch brush.

7. Large- and small-muscle play.

Because toddlers are vigorous and determined explorers who need to exercise newly developed motor skills, it is wise to provide space and equipment for jumping and climbing. In some centers, space for this all-important activity will be hard to find. Nonetheless, every effort should be made to ensure that toddlers have ample opportunities to move freely. Occasionally, large-muscle equipment may be nothing more than an old mattress for jumping on, a large cardboard box for crawling into, or a sturdy table that can be climbed upon.

Children also need to develop small-muscle skills with puzzles, sorting and stacking toys, and other manipulative games. These materials can be stored on shelves accessible to children in the library corner or the art or science areas.

Not all equipment and materials need to be out at the same time. Small toys, puzzles, and books can be available a few at a time, and brought out in response to cues from children's behavior.

Other Arrangements

Toddler rooms tend to be either too cluttered or too bare. Planning in terms of the suggested seven areas may be helpful to staff members. This does not mean that there should be no flexibility or imagination in designing toddler environments. For example, one day care center designed its toddler room as follows:

Area 1: entrance, dressing, potty chairs, books, telephones;
Area 2: play kitchen, housekeeping toys, water play;
Area 3: manipulative toys and large-muscle riding toys;
Area 4: library corner with rugs, couch, and books.

We encourage such creative planning as long as the developmental needs of toddlers are met. The diagrams offer some suggestions for planning appropriate toddler environments. If the group consists primarily of very young toddlers, 18 to 24 months, the areas can be simplified. It is still appropriate, however, to plan several activity centers.

Diagram A

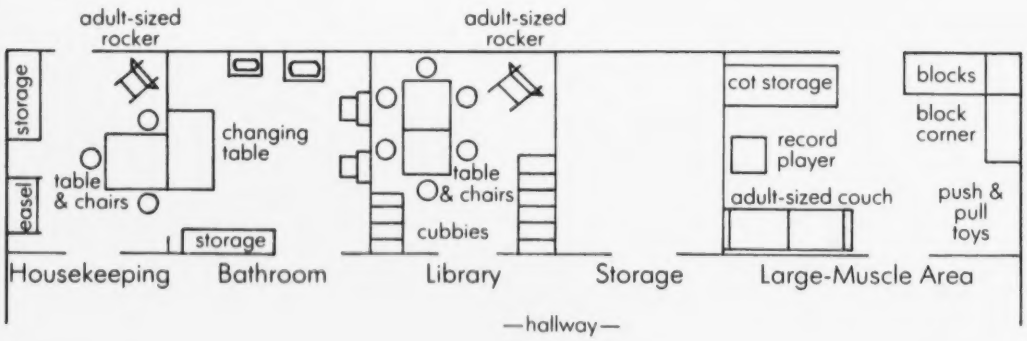


Diagram B

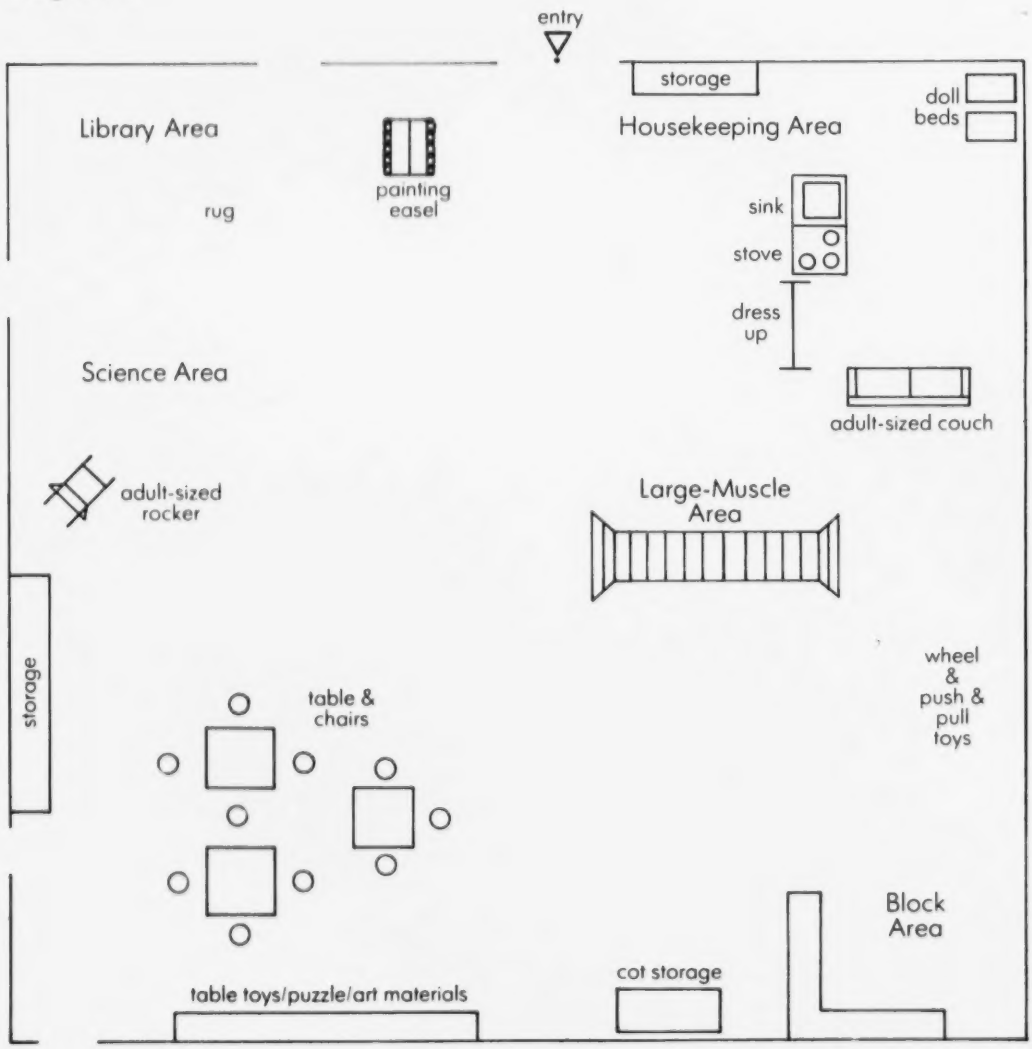
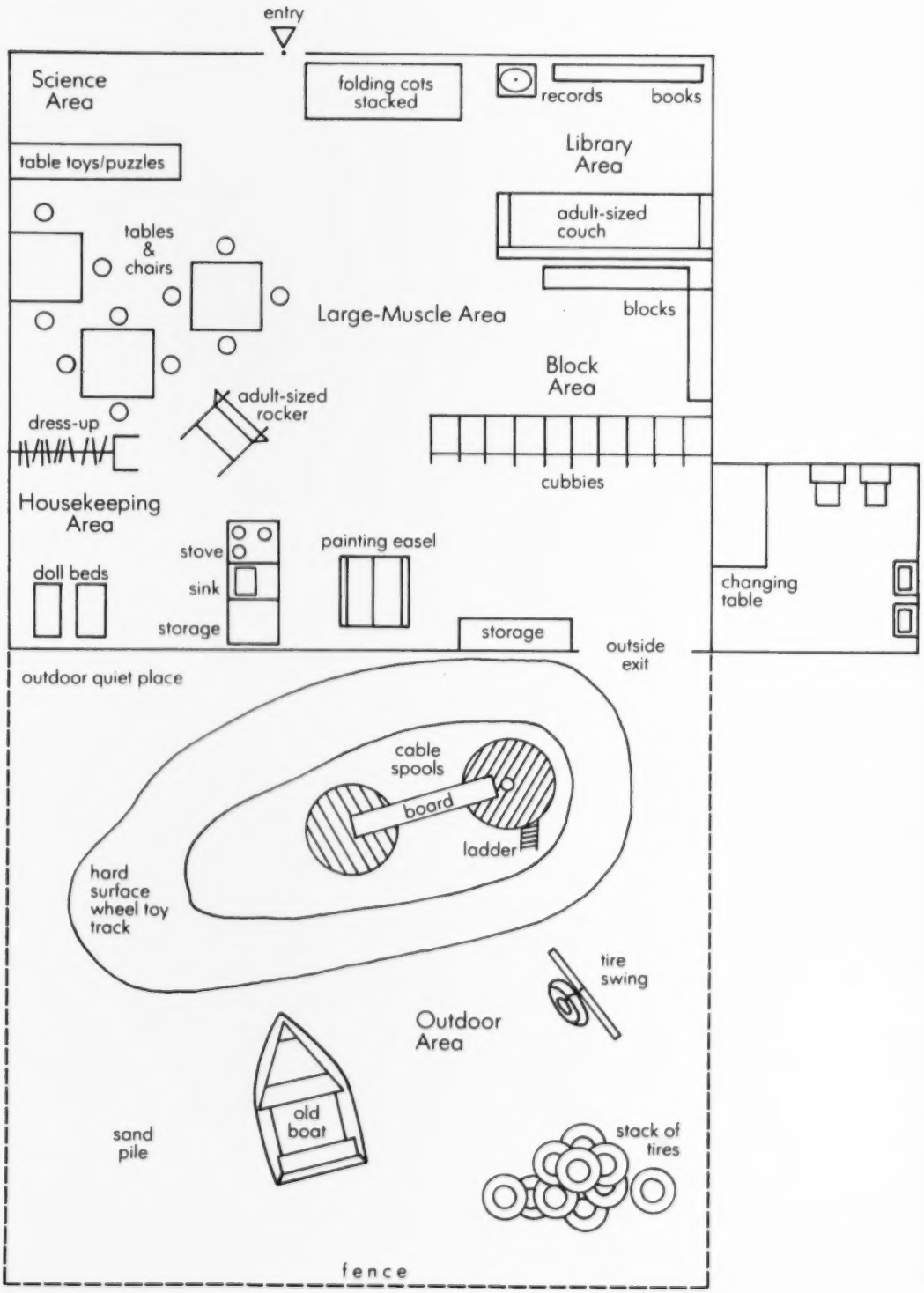


Diagram C


entry
Science Area
folding cots stacked
records
books
Library Area
table toys/puzzles
adult-sized couch
tables & chairs
Large-Muscle Area
blocks
Block Area
adult-sized rocker
dress-up
cubbies
Housekeeping Area
stove
sink
storage
painting easel
doll beds
changing table
storage
outside exit
outdoor quiet place
cable spools
board
ladder
hard surface wheel toy track
tire swing
Outdoor Area
old boat
sand pile
stack of tires
fence

Educational Equipment
(8 to 12 week program for 10 toddlers)

Much of the suggested equipment is scaled to the size of 3- and 4-year-olds. Staff members should cut legs off tables and easels, put large blocks in front of housekeeping equipment, and otherwise adapt equipment to the 2-year-old's needs.

Housekeeping area

kitchen set (stove, sink, refrigerator, small table)*
chairs*
dishes and utensils
doll carriages
full-length mirror (unbreakable ones will be found in nursery equipment catalogues)
2 doll beds (large enough for a child if possible)
4 rubber dolls (representing ethnic group served by center)
doll clothes (very simple) and pieces of fabric
dress-up clothes
cleaning set (child-sized mops and broom)
telephones (wooden or real surplus ones—no wires!)

Library area

books (25)†
book shelf
chairs or bright soft rugs or cushions (A small couch or comfortable chair may be attractive for adults to sit on when reading books to children.)

*Table height 12 to 14"; chairs should allow toddler's feet to be on the floor; seat should be 6 to 8" from the floor.

†Public libraries are usually happy to lend many books to a center for long periods of time. Care should be taken to explain to the library that these books are for very young children and the center should replace books that are badly damaged or lost.

Block area

50 unit blocks
25 double units
25 half units
block accessories—sets of people, animals, cars, and trains to use with block buildings; storage shelves for blocks and accessories
4 large-wheeled vehicles (For toddlers it may be preferable to have 4 that are exactly the same.)

Art area

table (large enough for 3 or 4 children to use 12" x 18" sheets of paper)
chairs
standing or wall painting easel
scissors (½ dozen pairs, some of which should be left-handed)
tempera paint (3 to 6 colors including red, yellow, blue) 9 quarts
newsprint (18" x 24") 1 ream
construction paper (assorted colors) 100 sheets
clay (moist potters clay) 10 lbs. (Can be used over and over if kept in balls about the size of an orange with a little water in cavity made by pushing thumb in hard; store in plastic bag.)
15 lbs. flour
5 lbs. salt
food coloring
} to make play dough
chalk, crayons, magic markers (2 dozen of each)

collage materials: fabric, paper, ribbon, yarn, string, scraps, macaroni (different shapes), popsicle sticks, sea shells, feathers, glue, and paste
puzzles, games, manipulative games
- 10 large, simple, wooden puzzles (1-10 pieces)
- 2 pegboards
- 2 lotto games
- 2 pounding benches
- 2 threading sets
- 4 shapes of sorting games; boxes
- 2 stacking toys

Water play area

large pans or special water play table
assorted unbreakable dishes, containers, and sponges for water play
waterproof aprons or smocks

Music area

record player and records
12 simple instruments bells, shakers, drums (can be homemade)

Science area

2 magnets
mirrors
stethoscope
plants
(We do not recommend animals as permanent residents in a class of toddlers.)

Large-muscle play area (indoors or outdoors)

climbing structure (Easily improvised with 2 cable spools and smoothly sanded boards.)
rocking boat
small indoor toddler gym
2 wagons
4 tricycles (8 inch)
6 balls (varied sizes)
sand (in a pile or, for indoors, in a sand table and sand toys)
large pull and push toys

Other equipment and supplies

12 cots
12 lockers
12 shelves
2 sheets
1 blanket
1 large towel
6 washcloths
extra clothing
} for each child
2 adult rocking chairs
1 adult couch (optional)
first aid supplies
meal equipment—dishes and feeding tables
potties
diaper changing supplies and changing table
diapers (25 "overnight" toddler disposable diapers per week per child)

housekeeping supplies
mops, pails, brooms, garbage pails, sponges, cleansers, soap, paper towels, toilet paper, diaper pails, disposable bags

As a final practical note, a 2-year-old group will require many sets of extra clothes, particularly underpants, socks, and slacks. Someone who is new to the business of wearing training pants can soak a pair of shoes or sneakers with just one "accident" so that slippers or extra sneakers may need to be kept on hand. It is rarely necessary for a center to buy extra clothing, as most communities respond well to requests for clean, used children's clothes. The more specific the request, the more likely it is to be successful. For example, a staff member may know someone who is an active Sunday School teacher, interested in the center, but unable to find time to participate. A phone call asking the teacher to assume responsibility for finding 6 pairs of underpants and 6 pairs of slacks in the 2 to 6 size range is likely to have a much more satisfactory result than a poster in a supermarket that may result in boxes and boxes of inappropriate cast-off clothing. Many parents may be willing to provide extra clothes, but for some families, extra clothes may be difficult to find. Children and their parents are, of course, likely to place a high value on their own clothes, and great care must be taken to ensure that children leave the center each day with the clothes they came in.

In Summary

The key to a good day care program for 2-year-olds lies in the abilities of the staff. Ideally, every member of the care-providing team, from janitor to director, should be a sensitive, loving teacher who knows what to expect of very young children and how to plan programs and arrange the environment accordingly. In addition to good people, a good environment can mean the difference between a program that merely offers custodial care and one that is planned to meet the developmental needs of children.

Selected References about Two-Year-Olds

Ames, Louise Bates and Frances L.Ilg. Your Two Year Old. New York: Delacorte Press, 1976.

Birckmayer, Jennifer. Terrific and Terrible Two-Year-Olds. Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet, 1980.

Brazelton, T. Berry. Toddlers and Parents. New York: Delacorte Press, 1975.

Fowler, William. Infant and Child Care: A Guide to Education in Group Settings. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1980.

Kilmer, Sally. "Infant-Toddler Group Day Care," Current Topics in Early Childhood Education, Vol. 2 (Lillian G. Katz, ed.). Norwood, New York: Ablex Publishing Co., 1979.

Rubin, Richard, John Fisher, Susan Doering, and Bill Parsons. Your Toddler. New York and London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1980.

Silverman, Phyllis. Planning a Toddler Playgroup in Your Own Home. Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet, 1980.

Sponseller, Doris. Play as a Learning Medium. 1834 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20009: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

White, B.L. The First Three Years of Life. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975.

Would you like our free catalog of extension publications? It is available from any county Cooperative Extension office in New York State, or write to:

Distribution Center
7 Research Park
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14850

Cooperative Extension, the New York State College of Human Ecology, and the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating. In furtherance of Acts of Congress May 8, June 30, 1914, and providing equal opportunities in employment and programs. Lucinda A. Noble, Director.

175/250 11/81 3M CP 7716